DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 290 904 CE 049 583

AUTHOR LeBleu, Lisa; Daniel, Ellen
TITLE The Perceptions and Practices of Home Economics Teacher Educators regarding the Preparation of Pre-Service Teachers for Political Participation.
PUB DATE Dec 87
NOTE 5p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Vocational Association (Las Vegas, NV, December 6-10, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Activism; *Educational Attitudes; Higher Education; Home Economics Education; *Home Economics Teachers; Political Influences; *Politics; *Preservice Teacher Education; Student Motivation; Student Organizations; Teacher Characteristics; *Teacher Educators; *Teacher Participation

ABSTRACT

A study was designed to investigate the perceptions and practices of home economics teacher educators with regard to the preparation of preservice vocational home economics teachers for political participation. The population for the research consisted of 277 home economics teacher educators throughout the United States; 186 usable responses (67 percent) were received from a questionnaire on teacher educator backgrounds, attitudes toward preparing teachers for political participation, and content of such preparation. Findings indicated that 100 percent of the respondents encouraged their students to join professional organizations; 97 percent also urged them to assume active leadership roles. Ninety-four percent of the respondents perceived a need to prepare preservice teachers for political participation, but only 85 percent were currently doing so. The most common types of activities included in teacher preparation for political participation were discussions of current legislation affecting home economics, the role of legislation in vocational education, and the political impact of professional organizations on legislation; and writing letters to legislators or other influential persons. The preparation was integrated into home economics courses, and there were slight differences according to teacher educator characteristics. (KC)

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THE PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF HOME ECONOMICS TEACHER EDUCATORS REGARDING THE PREPARATION OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

LISA LEBLEU, M.A.
ELLEN DANIEL, Ed.D.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHWESTERN LOUISIANA
SCHOOL OF HOME ECONOMICS
USL BOX 40399
LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA 70504

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THE PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF HOME ECONOMICS TEACHER EDUCATORS REGARDING THE PREPARATION OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

This study was designed to investigate the perceptions and practices of home economics teacher educators with regard to the preparation of pre-service vocational home economics teachers for political participation.

Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To determine the extent to which teacher educators perceived a need to prepare pre-service teachers for political participation.
2. To determine the extent to which teacher educators were preparing pre-service teachers for political participation.
3. To determine whether such preparation, if in existence, was integrated into home economics education courses or presented in a separate course either within or outside of the home economics unit.
4. To determine if there were differences in the perceptions and practices of teacher educators with regard to age, highest degree earned, membership in professional home economics education associations, and geographic region.

Population

The population for this research consisted of home economics teacher educators in the United States as listed in The 1985 National Directory of Vocational Home Economics Teacher Educators.

From this list, the researchers surveyed one teacher educator per institution. A total of 277 questionnaires were mailed. Seventy-one percent or 196 were returned. Usable responses totaled 186 or 67 percent. Regionally, the percentage returned ranged from 69% to 73%.

Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument devised by the researchers contained three major sections. Section A was designed to obtain background information on teacher educators. Section B of the instrument was designed to identify the perceptions and practices of teacher educators with regard to the preparation of pre-service teachers for political participation. Respondents were asked to indicate whether such preparation was taught in a separate course either within or outside of the home economics unit or integrated into home economics/home economics education courses. Additionally, the teacher educators were given a list of items that could be included in political participation studies and were asked to indicate those currently being used. Section C of the instrument was designed to obtain comments/ suggestions from teacher educators regarding the preparation of pre-service teachers for political participation.

Statistical Procedures

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Descriptive data were placed in contingency tables in order to identify differences in the responses of teacher educators with regard to age, highest degree earned, membership in professional home economics education associations, and geographic region.

Findings

Findings indicated that 100% of the respondents encouraged their students to join professional organizations while 97%

also urged them to assume active leadership roles. Ninety-four percent of the respondents perceived a need to prepare pre-service teachers for political participation, but only 85% were currently doing so.

The most common types of activities included in pre-service teachers' preparation for political participation were the discussion of current legislation affecting home economics, a discussion of the role of legislation in vocational education, a discussion of the political impact of professional organizations on legislation, and the writing of letters to legislators or other influential persons.

Results of the survey indicated that 92% of the preparation for political participation is integrated into home economics/ home economics education courses. There were few differences overall in the perceptions of teacher educators with regard to age, highest degree earned, membership in professional home economics education associations, and geographic region.

Conclusions

The conclusions of this study were:

1. Teacher educators indicated a need to prepare pre-service teachers for political participation.
2. Teacher educators were preparing pre-service teachers for political participation but with less frequency than the perceived need.
3. The preparation of pre-service vocational home economics teachers for political participation was integrated into home economics/home economics education courses.
4. There were slight differences in the perceptions of teacher educators with regard to age, highest degree earned, membership in professional home economics education associations, and geographic region.